

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CLUB SESSIONS

Contents

Introduction	2
Club Sessions	2
Uncoached Adult Club Sessions.	3
Junior Sessions	7
Uncoached Junior Sessions	9
Coached Club Sessions	10
Coaching/Supervision Ratios	10
Junior Coached Sessions	13
Juniors Training In Adult Sessions	17
Supporting Documents	18

SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR CLUB SESSIONS

INTRODUCTION

The following are best practice guidelines for club sessions. They are not intended to preclude clubs running sessions rather to provide structure and safety information. These safety guidelines should be used for all sessions with or without a coach. Specific guidelines for open water, open road sessions and junior sessions are included below.

Note that the guidelines relating to **Junior sessions** outlined below are in all cases mandatory. Junior refers to anyone under 18 years of age.

These procedures were submitted and approved by the Safeguarding Committee and CEO. All previous procedures are superseded by this version with effect from 30/08/2017.

Any issues arising from the transition between previous procedures and these shall be determined by the CEO, in consultation, where such issues are material, with the President.

This document may be amended from time to time by Triathlon Ireland. The definitive text of this document in force from time to time is the version contained on the TI internal server under Club Policies. Any printed text or electronic copy held elsewhere is only a snapshot of the text at the time it is printed, copied or downloaded.

CLUB SESSIONS

PLANNING A SESSION

The following planning and safety information is applicable to all sessions including, track, pool, turbo, open road, open water coached and uncoached.

One person or a group of people should take charge of organising (session activator). Where there is no coach this may fall to the committee or a TRI Leader. The session activator does not have to be a coach however, they can organise and lead the session but may not coach. This person, if not a coach, is not responsible for the safety of the participants and this should be made clear to participants, however the activator should be familiar with or have created the risk assessment and emergency action plan. They should send out pre-session information, including safety and logistical information, bring the sign on sheet, hold emergency contact and medical information.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The activator/group/coach should create a risk assessment for all venues/locations and club sessions which should be reviewed and updated regularly particularly in the event of an incident.

This should take into account the venue, different participant ages and ability levels, weather, first aid availability and equipment to be used. This will allow those organising the session to consider and mitigate for any potential risk.

For example, a swim location used may not be suitable for beginners. This should be noted and a plan put in place for beginners such as a buddy system, beginners only swimming parallel to the shore or beginners not attending the session and a separate session being organised.

If a club is using the same venue/location for regular sessions then the same risk assessment can be used once there are no changes, for example if the first aider for the session is different this should be recorded on the sign in sheet.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The activator/group/coach should create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for all venues and sessions to be run which should be reviewed and updated regularly particularly in the event of an incident.

Everyone involved should be clear on their role in the emergency action plan. If a club are using the same locations/venues for numerous sessions the same EAP can be used, however the 'designated lead' (takes the lead in the case of emergency and 'designated person' (to call emergency services)' and 'session lead' (Coach/Leader) should be noted on the session sign in sheets (note: as long as the club have an accurate record of attendance sign in can be completed online or in hard copy with the exception of open water sessions where participants should sign in and out).

UNCOACHED ADULT CLUB SESSIONS.

Triathlon Ireland (TI) recognises that not all clubs have qualified coaches and TI insurance allows for this.

Clubs can still run sessions including adult open water and adult open road cycles, however only a coach can coach during these sessions. In the absence of a coach another club member, preferably a TRI Leader can lead or activate a session. This means they can organise a club session following the safety guidelines outlined here. These sessions can be either just an unstructured swim or cycle or those in the session can practice skills, drills etc based on a session plan discussed with a coach in advance. Prior to the session the group can discuss what they will do in the session but they will not be coached during the session by the leader/activator.

Note: All club members must be both club and Triathlon Ireland members in order to have insurance cover for sessions. Individuals can attend up to 3 sessions prior to joining a club and will be insured for those 3 sessions

OPEN WATER SWIM SESSIONS:

VENUE:

- Leader/activator/ coach should prepare risk assessment and emergency action plan for specific venue.
- Seek advice from a local authority where you are intending to swim if it is a sea swim or in an unfamiliar location.

PREPARATORY POOL SESSIONS:

Individuals should attend 3 pool sessions with the club prior to attending an open water swim session. This can be at the discretion of the club coach who may feel the person needs further pool sessions or is more than ready to begin open water sessions. During these sessions open water techniques should be introduced and practiced during the session. These sessions should give an indication of ability level and readiness to move to open water sessions. Individuals should be able to competently swim 400-500 metres continuously in a pool before moving to open water.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

The club should create guidelines for participants to be sent out prior to sessions. These should include:

- Location and time of session.
 - Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
 - What to expect in an open water session.
 - If there is a coach present.
 - What safety support will be present.
 - What ability level the session is suitable for.
 - Structure of the session if working from a session plan.
 - Rules for the session, for example wetsuits are required, club membership is compulsory, participants must sign in and out.
 - Participants who have relevant medical conditions must be willing to provide medical information to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training sessions.
 - Participants must provide an emergency contact.
- Note: Both relevant medical information and emergency contact can be collected at the start of the year and just updated when necessary.

ON THE DAY:

- The Leader/session activator/coach should ensure those with relevant medical conditions have provided medical information and everyone has supplied an emergency contact.
- The Leader/session activator should ensure that everyone knows their role in the event of an emergency.
- The Leader/activator should provide sign in sheets.
- Groups should be screened and those new to open water identified. If possible clubs should try and operate a buddy system for beginners to open water swim or use swim buoys.
- Give the group clear direction of where to enter and exit the water, what direction to swim any tidal or safety information relevant to that area.
- Protocol if they or someone else needs assistance.
- Spotter on shore with hi viz, whistle and phone. Add additional Spotters where necessary. Consider if one spotter needs to leave urgently or call for emergency assistance.
- All Participants should be counted in and out of the water.
- Lifeguard and first aider present.
- A safety kayak or paddle board. **The ratio of safety craft to adult participants is 1:20.**

POST SESSION:

- Record any incidents and review risk assessment and emergency action plan if necessary.
- Ask for feedback from attendees regarding how they think the session went and if they felt safe.

OPEN ROAD CYCLE SESSION:

CLOSED ROAD PREPARATORY SESSIONS:

These sessions should cover:

- Basic open road skills: cycling in a group, road safety.
- How to change a tube.
- Equipment required.
- [M Checks](#) (Bike safety check).

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS

The club should create guidelines for participants in these sessions to be sent out prior to sessions.

These include:

- Location and time of session.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- Route plan for the session.
- Whether or not there is a coach present

- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session, for example attendees must carry water.
- Participants who have relevant medical conditions must be willing to provide medical information to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training sessions.
- Participants must provide an emergency contact.

ON THE DAY:

- The leader/session activator/coach should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and an emergency contact.
- Bike safety checks performed by each person prior to beginning.
- Leader/activator/coach should carry phone.
- Sign in sheets.
- Group should be screened and those new to open road identified.
- If possible have a support car.

ADULT SESSIONS: ENCLOSED AREA

These can be planned as above and run with or without a coach/TRI Leader. These include track training, turbo sessions, park sessions and pool sessions.

SAFETY:

Create [Risk Assessment](#) and [Emergency Action Plan](#).

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Session information should be sent out prior to the session. This should include:

- Location and time of session.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- Who is coaching/leading the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session.

ON THE DAY:

- The Leader/session activator/coach should ensure that anyone with relevant medical conditions has provided information and all attendees have provided medical information and an emergency contact.
- The Leader/session activator/coach should provide sign in sheets.
- Lifeguard present if pool session.
- Ability levels assessed and catered for.

JUNIOR SESSIONS

JUNIOR OPEN WATER AND OPEN ROAD SESSIONS CANNOT BE RUN WITHOUT A LEVEL 1 OR LEVEL 2 COACH

CLUBS WITH NO COACH HAVE THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS FOR RUNNING OPEN WATER/OPEN ROAD SESSIONS FOR JUNIORS:

- Run a couple of open water/road sessions during the year only and request a TI Development Officer to be present.
- Link up with another club who has coaches for these sessions
- Find a coach in your area to facilitate these sessions, check 'Find a coach' on the TI website.
- If a club member has alternative qualifications which may be appropriate, for example, a Cycling Ireland Level 1 then check with TI by emailing coaching@triathlonireland.com to check if this individual can facilitate junior sessions.

For all junior sessions, coached or uncoached, the following guidelines should be used:

SAFETY:

A coach/leader/activator should consider the environment/activity/support/numbers when working with juniors. These areas may have to be adapted to create safe and effective sessions

RISK ASSESSMENT

The activator/group/coach should create a risk assessment for all venues and sessions to be run which should be reviewed and updated regularly particularly in the event of an incident.

This should consider the venue, different participant ages and ability levels, weather, first aid availability, equipment to be used. This will allow those organising the session to consider and

mitigate for any potential risk.

For Junior sessions this should also include a [Safeguarding risk assessment](#) ([see example here](#)) which should be completed in consultation with the club childrens' officer. This should look at issues like using public changing facilities and a child being collected late or getting a puncture during a club cycle.

EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The activator/group/coach should create an [Emergency Action Plan](#) for all venues and sessions to be run which should be reviewed and updated regularly particularly in the event of an incident.

Everyone involved should be clear on their role in the emergency action plan. The needs of the child are paramount and the EAP should reflect this.

CONSENT

- Participants under the age of 18 must provide the coach with a Parental Coaching Consent Form ([Form 11](#)). Any participant failing to submit a form at the start of the year signed by a parent or guardian should not be allowed to participate in the session.
- Leader/activator/coach should collect and retain appropriate details regarding each participant including name, emergency contact and specific health requirements or medical conditions of the participants, preferably using a registration form or consent [Form 11](#). The information should be stored securely and appropriately by the club childrens' officer ensuring confidentiality of information is maintained, under the Data Protection Act. Personal and medical information should only be disclosed to those necessary and where it is in the best interest of the child. In some cases, it may be necessary to talk directly with the participant and/or parent/guardian before the session.

SAFEGUARDING

Any coach/leader/activator working with athletes under the age of 18 on a regular basis, must undertake the following prior to beginning this role.

- [Garda Vetting/Access NI](#) through Triathlon Ireland- this is a legal requirement.
- Signed Code of conduct – [Form 8/Form 10](#)
- Attended Safeguard 1 course.

UNCOACHED JUNIOR SESSIONS

JUNIOR SESSIONS IN ENCLOSED AREAS

These can be led by a TRI Leader using a session plan from a coach. These include track training, turbo sessions, sessions in a park or similar, pool sessions. In a pool setting a lifeguard must be present at all times.

SAFETY:

Create [Risk Assessment](#) and [Emergency Action Plan](#).

Collect and store all consent forms – Form 11.

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Session information should be sent out prior to the session. This should include:

- Location of session
- Time of session and time for collection – The club should ask parents to stay for the session particularly if additional supervision is necessary.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- The ratio of coaches/leaders to juniors expected.
- Who is coaching/leading the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session, for example, Form 11's must be completed (including medical information), parent/guardian must be present, juniors must wear high viz.

ON THE DAY:

- The Leader/session activator/coach should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and emergency contact via the Form 11.
- The Leader/session activator/coach should provide sign in sheets.
- Lifeguard present if pool session.
- Juniors should never be out of sight on a bike or run session.
- Ability levels assessed and catered for.
- Sufficient ratios for supervision.
-

COACHED CLUB SESSIONS

COACHING LEVELS

TRI Leader:

- Can organise and facilitate any adult session but they may not coach.
- Can organise, facilitate and lead a junior session in an enclosed area using a session plan prepared by a coach (not open road or open water).
- Can assist a coach in other sessions

Level 1 Coach - Club Coach

- Can coach an adult pool, run or cycle group session in an enclosed area.
- Cannot take part in a session while coaching.
- Can provide a plan and outline what participants should do during an open water or open road session however they may not coach during the session, but they can accompany the group.

Level 2 Coach

- Can plan and deliver group and individual sessions including open water and open road for adult and juniors.
- Can coach during the session but not while taking part.

COACHING/SUPERVISION RATIOS

It is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that the group is adequately supervised. The coaching ratios outlined in this document provides a maximum ratio to ensure a safe coaching session. Coaches must only coach the number of triathletes they feel confident and competent to deal with, within the recommendations. The coach: participant ratio should be sufficient to enable meaningful help to be given to any participant who is having difficulties. Younger children, beginners and those with disabilities or special needs, for example, may require extra supervision.

Regardless of group size, it is recommended that when coaching young athletes, a minimum of two responsible adults (with at least one person holding a valid coaching qualification at an appropriate level) are present at all times to ensure an adequate level of supervision. This is important for safeguarding reasons as one coach is not alone with the junior athlete and means that in an emergency one adult can stay with the group while the other can go for help or deal with the

emergency.

It is good practice to have a clear and accurate record of everyone involved in the delivery of the session. This will ensure the coach is able to identify who attended a particular session should an issue be raised at a later date that. A coach should not take a dual role of coach and lifeguard and should not take part in the session if they are actually coaching.

ADULT SESSIONS COACHING RATIOS

Session Delivered	TRI Leader	Level 1	Level 2
Pool Based Swimming Sessions (separate lifeguard present)	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:8	1:16
Open Water Swim Sessions (separate lifeguard and first aider present)	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:6 once Open water CPD completed	1:14
Cycling Enclosed area for example; park, turbo sessions (no traffic)	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:16	1:20
Cycling Open Road	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:6 once Open road CPD completed	1:8
Running Enclosed area	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:12	1:20
Running open road	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	Not covered to coach but can facilitate session	1:16

Note: These ratios are for coaching during a session. An experienced coach may be able to facilitate a larger session in an enclosed area such as track or turbo sessions if the group is working from a session plan.

JUNIOR SESSIONS – SUPERVISION/COACHING RATIOS

Session Delivered	Junior Assistant (adult who has completed 3 safeguarding steps)	TRI Leader	Level 1	*Level 2
Pool Based Swimming Session (lifeguard present)	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:6	1:6	1:8	1:14
Open Water Swim Sessions (lifeguard and first aider present)	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:4	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:4	1:6 once Open water CPD completed.	1:8
Cycling Enclosed area for example; park, turbo sessions (no traffic)	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:6	1:6	1:8	1:14
Cycling Open Road (age 16 by the 31 st Dec)	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:4	1:4 Not covered to lead, can assist	1:6 once Open road CPD completed.	1:8
Running Enclosed area	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:6	1:6	1:8	1:14
Running open road	Not covered to lead, can assist 1:4	1:4 Not covered to lead, can assist	1:6	1:8

*These ratios are guidelines and although a Level 2 coach has the option to coach larger groups they should be supported by Level 1 coaches, TRI Leaders and Junior Assistants. whose group sizes should be reflective of the ratios listed as well as their experience and ability level.

JUNIOR COACHED SESSIONS

JUNIOR OPEN WATER SESSION:

AGE:

The minimum age for open water sessions is 8 years old, however not all 8 year olds will have the confidence or ability to begin open water sessions so leader/activator/coach should be aware that they may need to adapt and tailor sessions depending on the group.

POOL PREPARATORY SESSION

All juniors (under 18's) should attend a minimum of 3 club pool sessions first. This is at the discretion of the club/coach who may feel an individual needs further pool sessions prior to progressing. These sessions should be used to assess ability level and practice and prepare for open water.

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that junior athletes attain specific competencies prior to moving to open water. Once in open water focus should be on acclimatising and practicing competencies learned in the pool. The competencies document should be kept on file for junior athletes so club coaches can track progression. See sample template [here](#).

Junior Swim Competencies – Pool to Open Water Progression

- Swimming in straight line
- Breathing
- Swimming in a group
- Sighting
- Swimming with swim buoy
- Safety protocol if they get into difficulty
- Swim distance- should equate to their age appropriate race distance.

Other areas to consider:

- Putting on a wetsuit
- Dealing with the cold
- Adapting or changing stroke from the pool to open water
- Dealing with anxiety and panic
- Building confidence and being relaxed in the water.

PARTICIPANT GUIDELINES

Session information should be sent out prior to the session. This should include:

- Location of session

- Time of session and time for collection – The club should ask parents to stay for the session particularly if additional supervision or spotters are necessary.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans.
- The ratio of coaches/leaders to juniors expected.
- Who is coaching the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session, for example wetsuits are mandatory, Form 11's must be completed (including medical information), parent/guardian must be present.

ON THE DAY:

- The coach/appointed assistant/Childrens Officer should ensure everyone in attendance has provided medical information and emergency contact via the Form 11.
- Lifeguard present.
- Water temperature: Minimum of 11 Degrees Celsius. Maximum swim distances can be completed when the temperature is 13 Degrees or above. Wetsuits compulsory when less than 14 Degrees.
- The Leader/session activator/coach should provide sign in sheets.
- Juniors should swim parallel to the shore within their depth and should be able to see the shore at all times. If the juniors cannot stand in the water then flotation buoys should be used. Additional use of flotation buoys is at the discretion of the club as it may be deemed necessary for juniors to use them at all times depending on location and conditions.
- Ratios: (leaders/coaches: juniors) in the water.
- Give the group clear direction of where to enter and exit the water.
- Tailor the safety briefing to the age of the group including protocol if they or someone else needs assistance.
- Spotter on shore with hi viz, whistle and phone. Add additional Spotters where necessary. Consider if one spotter needs to leave urgently or call for emergency assistance.
- Safety craft, either a kayak, paddle board, boat. It may be useful to have some flotation aids attached to the craft which can be thrown out. **Ratio of safety craft to participant is 1:10.**
- Club could provide or ask that juniors wear a specific colour swim hat so they are easy to spot.

Please see the following example of how a well-established junior Triathlon club run open water sessions with progression:

Beginners: stay in depth until comfortable. Then very very short swims out of depth and back to depth. Coach and parental cover always used plus buoyancy aids.

Improved: swim out of depth but have shown proficiency. Minimum of two coaches with this group plus parental/experienced swim support.

Advanced: coach plus other competent swimmers plus kayak support.

Lifeguard support: The club pays for the county council lifeguards to stay on to cover sessions for July and August.

JUNIOR OPEN ROAD BIKE SESSIONS

AGE:

16 years old by the 31st of December.

CLOSED ROAD PREPARATORY SESSIONS

- These sessions should cover basic open road skills, cycling safely in a group, road safety.
- Equipment required
- M Checks

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

The club should create guidelines for participants in these sessions to be sent out prior to sessions. These include:

- Location and time of session.
- Ratios of leaders to juniors
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans
- Route plan for the session.
- Which coach is taking the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session, for example attendees must carry water.
- Participants must be willing to provide relevant medical info via the Form 11 to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training sessions.
- Participants must provide an emergency contact.

ON THE DAY:

- The Leader/session activator/coach should ensure everyone in attendance has provided an emergency contact and medical information if relevant.
- Leader/activator should carry phone.
- Sign in sheets.
- Group should be screened and those new to open road identified.
- If possible have a support car.
- Bike checks performed by each person prior to beginning.
- The Sport Ireland Safesport app allows parents to track the coach's phone so can see where the group is at any stage.

JUNIOR OPEN ROAD RUN SESSIONS

AGE:

16 years old by the 31st of December.

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS:

The club should create guidelines for participants in these sessions to be sent out prior to sessions. These should include:

- Location and time of session.
- Ratios: Consider the need to stop if a junior gets injured or is unwell. In this instance 2 people should stop with them. Either a Leader and another athlete or 2 leaders. Consider the need for splitting the group according to ability level.
- Completed Risk Assessment and Emergency Action Plans
- Route plan for the session.
- Which coach is taking the session.
- What ability level the session is suitable for
- Structure of the session if working from a session plan
- Rules for the session, for example attendees must carry water, wear Hi Viz etc.
- Participants with relevant medical conditions must provide information via the Form 11 to the individual running the session which must be stored confidentially but accessible at training sessions.
- Participants must provide an emergency contact.

ON THE DAY:

- The Leader/session activator/coach should ensure everyone in attendance has provided an emergency contact and medical information if relevant.

- Leader/activator should carry phone.
- Sign in sheets.
- Group should be screened and those new to open road identified.
- If possible have a support car/bike.
- The Sport Ireland Safesport app allows parents to track the coach's phone so can see where the group is at any stage.

JUNIORS TRAINING IN ADULT SESSIONS

Junior athletes can take part in adult sessions as long as the following guidelines are observed.

- Ability Levels: Ensure the junior athlete is capable of completing the session or a modified version of the session. Distances and intensity should be appropriate to age and ability.
- Safeguarding:
 - Coach/Leader: Anyone working regularly with junior athletes must complete the safeguarding steps.
 - Either a parent/guardian or someone acting in locus parentis should attend sessions and take responsibility for the junior as soon as the session is over. This person should either take part (eg. cycle) or be on the side lines. Form 11a (absent parental consent) should be submitted to the club childrens officer if the parent/guardian is giving responsibility to another adult for their child during the session.
- Review: After a few sessions the situation should be reviewed in consultation with the childrens officer, the child, the parent/guardian and coach to ensure everyone is satisfied with the arrangement. The needs of the child are paramount and any decisions should be in the best interests of the child.

The process may differ club to club and TI will consult with clubs where necessary.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Policies

[Safeguarding Policy](#)

[Garda Vetting/Access NI application steps](#)

Forms

[Garda Vetting Form](#)

[Access NI Form](#)

[Parental Consent Form 11](#)

[Absent Parent Form 11a](#)

[Accident Report Form](#)

[Incident Report Form](#)

[Form 8 \(Code of Conduct\)](#)

[Form 10 \(Code of Conduct\)](#)

Templates

[Risk Assessment template](#)

[Emergency Action Plan template](#)

[Safeguarding Risk Assessment template](#)

[Session Plan Template](#)

[M Check diagram](#)

[Junior Swim Competencies](#)